

# Learning Theory Summary

## Cognitivism

**Description:** This theory is based on the idea that the brain is similar to a computer in the way it handles and processes information. Information enters the mind, it is processed as it travels and this creates some outcome. Similarly, information enters into the computer's hard drive and is processed as it is transferred to memory and this processing generates an output which is visible on the screen.

**Usefulness:** The theory of Cognitivism is useful to my teaching as it allows me to visualize the process information may be taking as it is transferred from me to my students. This visual representation of the information processing allows me to better understand the process. Through this understanding I find it easier to determine where the processing is breaking down for my students and thus why they do not understand the information. With this visual it creates a sort of map to follow to test where the information stopped or where the processing is breaking down. This is similar to the way you test a circuit to determine where the flow of electricity stops. This logical representation of the mind as similar to a computer allows me to better reach my students with my lessons and thus allows me to be a better teacher.

## ARCS Model of Motivational Design (Keller)

**Description:** The ARCS model focuses around 4 main motivators: Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction. Attention as motivation is attainable through two types of arousal: perceptual arousal using surprise or uncertainty and inquiry arousal using curiosity. Relevance to previous knowledge or examples can help increase the learners motivation. Confidence helps motivate learners by providing them with objectives and likelihood for success. Satisfaction allows learning to be rewarding for the learner and thus motivates them to continue.

**Usefulness:** The theory of ARCS Model of Motivational Design is useful to my teaching practices because it outlines the motivators for students. Having not only an understanding of what motivates students to learn but also an understanding of why these things motivate students to learn allows me to tailor my lessons better. This theory forces me not only to consider these factors but also to think deeper about exactly how I use each factor to motivate my students to learn. As a result, each piece of the lesson contains these motivators with a deeper understanding of how they will help the students better connect to the material.

## Social Learning Theory (Bandura)

**Description:** The Social Learning Theory focuses on the way that behaviours, attitudes and outcomes experienced by other students during the learning process will affect the learner. It encompasses attention, memory and motivation as important pieces of modeling the learning process.

**Usefulness:** The theory of Social Learning is useful to my teaching process because it allows me to better understand group work at a deeper level and thus to generate useful activities the students can connect with. Understanding the effects other students success with course material can have on the learning process is important to understand. Collaborative work is an important part of the learning process but without properly understanding the dynamics of collaborative work it can go wrong. This understanding allows me to better design collaborative working tasks and to think ahead of time how I want to arrange groups for working together so students who are having success with the material can help those who are struggling while also ensuring balance exists within all groups. This will allow the students to achieve success through the help of their peers and also help them connect deeper with the material.

## Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger)

**Description:** The Communities of Practice theory is based off a community of learners brought together surrounding one key topic. While participating in this community they share ideas, practices and strategies building a collaborative group of learners.

**Usefulness:** The theory of Communities of Practice is useful to my teaching practice because it enhances the knowledge gained from the theory of Social Learning and gives a more in-depth look at exactly how the dynamics of group work develop a deeper connection with the material. The practice of working together on collaborative group work helps students to share their ideas and practices for working with material. This allows them both to critically analyze their processes as well as their peers in comparison to the ideas being shared and determine for themselves what they believe to be the most effective process and further allows them to learn from each other. This process helps them commit the material to memory and thus be able to achieve a deeper level of understanding.

